

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL
9 July 1985

ISRAEL ARMS
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WASHINGTON

Israel is exporting more than \$1 billion a year in arms and military expertise to more than 100 countries worldwide and the trade accounts for some 20 percent of its total industrial exports, an American-born Israeli author said Tuesday.

Aaron Klieman, professor of international relations at Tel Aviv University and now a visiting professor at Georgetown University, said that while Israeli arms exports are fractional compared to the Soviet Union and the United States, they are a vital part of its economy and rank high among the increasing number of Third World arms producers.

Often Israeli arms sales conflict with U.S. or Western policy, he said. Conversely, Israel is almost entirely dependent on U.S. arms aid and to a lesser degree for parts and technology for the arms it exports.

The Byzantine world of arms exports and imports is explored in depth in Klieman's book, 'Israel's Global Reach: Arms Sales as Diplomacy,' which he discussed at a news conference.

'Israel is merely an example of more than a dozen countries like Brazil, India, South Korea, Singapore and South Africa ... attempting to attain a degree of self-sufficiency and not be dependent on big countries,' he said.

In the process, he said, Israel became a 'merchant of arms,' accounting for some one-fourth of the country's industrial exports as of 1984-1985.

'Barring any unforeseen sharp reversal of policy,' he writes in the book, 'the manufacture and transfer of Israeli arms can be expected to figure prominently ... as an independent course of diplomacy for the remainder of this decade and, indeed, well into the 1990s.'

Klieman cited world military expenditures that rose from \$600 billion in 1980 to about \$970 billion in 1984 and which are projected to pass the trillion-dollar mark this year.

The 'arms bazaar' works both ways, Klieman said. 'Israel is hardly alone in the rush to procure arms. It finds itself in a region several of whose Arab members consistently lead the list of world weapons importers.'

He maintains that after the 1973 Yom Kippur War, Israel branched out from the export of Uzi submachine guns and small arms to home-built Kfir jet fighters, with U.S.-supplied or designed engines or components; tanks, missiles, patrol boats and sophisticated electronics. Israel this year even leased a dozen later model Kfir jets to the U.S. forces to simulate Soviet MiG fighters in combat training.

Israeli arms clients are not always on the best of terms with the United States, Britain or many other countries.

Klieman noted that Israel supplied arms to Argentina during its war with Britain over the Falklands; sent arms to South Africa until complying with a U.N. embargo and sold to India during its wars with China and Pakistan.

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'Many of its (Israel's) best military clients also happen to be countries or leaders with serious image problems,' Klieman acknowledged.

On the other hand, he writes, U.S. military and intelligence officials may be willing to cooperate or look the other way in return for Israeli support of American policy.

Klieman cited 'reported efforts by the Reagan administration and especially the Central Intelligence Agency, to get Israel to become more active in overtly and covertly helping to weaken the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and in backing the Contras.' Israel had started selling arms to Nicaragua as far back as the 1950s.

He said that in 1983 'at the request of the United States, Israel agreed to send weapons captured from the PLO to Honduras for eventual use by Nicaraguan rebels.'